



Paul Opolka

May 13, 1956 - April 15, 2026

VULCAN – It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of Paul "Stringbean" Opolka, age 69, of Vulcan. Paul passed away peacefully on April 15, 2026, at Pinecrest Medical Care Facility after a courageous battle with MS for over three decades.

He was born on May 13, 1956 in Norway, the beloved son of the late Joseph "Sam" and Viola (Laurila) Opolka.

Paul graduated from Norway High School in 1974. He began working at the Niagara paper mill in 1975 and was well-known for his easy-going, carefree spirit. As a man of great strength, Paul privately managed his illness until he was no longer able to work.

Paul always had a project in motion; he took immense pride in building his own home and camp, working on cars, and restoring old tractors. In his free time, he enjoyed spending time with his family, riding in his Chevelle, going on vacations and spending time at the cottage making lasting memories.

Paul is survived by his children Paul (Carrie) Opolka Jr., Sara (Nick) Toreson, Katy (Brutus) Kiser; grandchildren Ashlyn Opolka, Alexis and William Toreson, Beau, Finley and Pemene Kiser and Alec Christiansen; sisters Diane (Roger) Peppler, Lori Opolka, Kathy Butler; several nieces, nephews and cousins;

also, many special caretakers.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his brother Steven Opolka; brothers-in-law Stephen Podgornik and Joe Butler; and a niece Heather Janssen.

A celebration of life will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Saturday, July 11, 2026 at State Street Venue in Loretto.

In lieu of flowers, please share your favorite memories of Paul with others.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 11. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

State Street Venue
1649 State Street
Loretto, MI 49852

Tribute Wall

RM

“ *My sincere sympathies for your families loss, Paul was a good friend and school mate, he picked me up for school many times in the (green beater) I appreciated his mild temper and humor. May your family be comforted by knowing that Paul is in Gods loving Memory. (Isaiah 26:19) Rest easy my friend Paul, and awake happy and healthy! Raymond Marinconz*

Raymond Marinconz - April 19 at 09:54 AM

CA

“ *I'm going to miss my dear cousin Paul. When after I graduated from high school , we went to visit and Paul was welcoming and With his booming friendly voice. Smile, and couldn't do enough for me to make me feel welcome (as with the entire O'polka family. Diane, Kathy and Lori!) Im proud to have a cousin like Paul, who loved to help others, a family man, and so jovial he could make one feel better during hard times. He kept on being jovial bespite his illness, he never complained! A true example to me. I will never forget his jovial ways and his Voice and will miss him. My deepest condolences to the family. His spirit will live on with all of us. 🙏🕊️*



Cynthia Appolito - April 18 at 10:10 AM

RP

“ *Friend. Caring. Easy Going. There to help. Took things in stride. Family. To me that's Paul. Always kind and just a good person who loved to joke in a good way. I would visit him when we were back in Norway and, even in the early years of his MS, he didn't complain or make it something that defined him. He remained Paul the guy who made you better just talking with him. Visiting him when he lived in Powers was no different except he couldn't understand why I didn't like Bonanza as much as the other westerns! But we had fun with that. Great memories from a really good person. Many nice times over the years. He leaves us all with warm thoughts, and we know he now is being happily embraced in the heavens. Deepest condolences to the family.*

Ric Parolini

Ric Parolini - April 17 at 06:32 PM

CM

“ *So sad to hear of Paul's passing. He and my brother were friends and Paul would come over to our house. My mom and Paul would tease each other. She thought Stringbean was just great. I saw him a couple of times in the last few years and we would still joke around. He was a nice man.*

Carla Miron - April 17 at 03:48 PM

JS

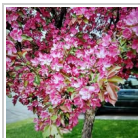
I will miss him. I could write a book about all the fun times I had with him

Jeanne Smith - April 18 at 06:13 PM

GG

“ I’m so sorry to hear about Paul. Having lived across the street from the Opolka family I have many fond memories not just of “Stringbean” but of the entire family. Though not having seen them after finishing college and moving away 46 years ago they have a place in my heart. Believe it or not, I think of you all regularly, my memories frozen in time of when we were all young. I thank God for placing you all in my life’s journey. God bless you and may you all know God’s peace and comfort as you mourn the loss of your brother.

George Gifford - April 17 at 12:07 PM



“ I only knew Paul through his teenage years. He was always so kind to me when Diane and I were riding horses together as was the whole family. My brother-in-law has also dealt with MS for decades and I'm so sorry to hear that Paul had it. My love and prayers go out to you all.

Terry Noordhoff Gregory

Terry Gregory - April 17 at 05:48 AM

SL

“ As one of Paul’s caretakers for the past two years, I grew to love this man so much! I shared a special connection with him, doted on him (even tho we aren’t “supposed” to have favorites), and loved him immensely! He was a big part of my work life and I will miss seeing his smile, hearing him speak of PJ, his Chevelle, and spending extra time with him. My condolences to Pauls family! My love is with you all!



Stacey Lesperance - April 16 at 08:11 PM